

BUSEY (S.C.)

The Medical Society of the District of Columbia

IN 1894,

WITH SOME IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS.

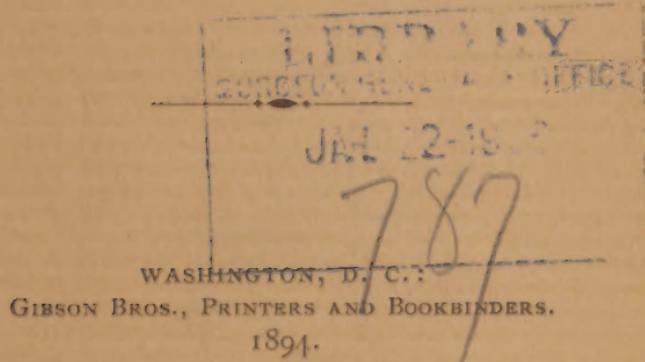
ANNUAL ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT,

DELIVERED BY

SAMUEL C. BUSEY, M. D.

DECEMBER 19, 1894.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY.



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GENTLEMEN: My first intention was to make this address a narrative of some reminiscences of my early professional life, that I might contrast the life and trials of the beginner forty-seven years ago and now; but after its preparation I concluded it would be an unjustifiable departure from the custom of the occasion, and an unwarrantable liberty on the part of the chief executive officer to seek the discharge of such an official duty with a narration of personal reminiscences—especially so, in view of the historic and instructive incidents of the present year.

The present has been an eventful year in the history of this society. The commemoration of the 75th anniversary, on the 16th of February last, marked an epoch which will be held in lasting remembrance by all who participated in the exercises of that brilliant occasion.

In view of my official connection with that event and

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present relations with the society, it becomes my duty to collate and record in some permanent form the more important incidents relating thereto, and growing out of that event, which have made the present the most prosperous and instructive year in the history of this society.

The cordial and fraternal response of the eleven senior medical societies in this country to the invitation to unite with us in giving expression to our praise and gratitude in memory of the noble men who founded the society in 1819 was a fitting exhibition of that fraternal comity and good-will which make kindred of us all.

An occasion which brings together such kindred spirits in homage to a common pursuit, animated by the inspiration of a beneficent profession, enlarges the scope of thought and broadens the conception of reciprocal duty. It lifts men out of the rut of provincial utility, widens the field of active usefulness, and gives spirit and activity to the hopes of a future more brilliant than the past.

If not before, we know now, that this society, now in the prime of mature life, has attained that standing which places it among the foremost medical societies in this country. It has been my good fortune, on many occasions, during the past twenty-five years, to meet in various assemblages the most distinguished men of our profession in this country and many abroad, and I have always returned home with the conviction that there were members of this society quite up to the highest attainments of the scientific physician. The more I have seen of the profession in general, the higher has been my estimate of the talent at home. Such is the statement of one who wishes to utter only the simple and unreserved truth of observation and conviction.

During the present year thirty-five members have been admitted to full active membership. This fact, together

with the largely increased average attendance (53) at the regular meetings, gives impetus to the progress which has marked the history of this society since 1866. During the first session of this year the average attendance was $42\frac{1}{2}$, the highest number at any one meeting being 86 and the smallest 26. During the present session the average attendance has been 73, the highest number at any one meeting 105, and the smallest 48. So that it is shown that the attendance has continuously increased during the year. Our distinguished historian, Dr. J. M. Toner, has collected ninety-four titles, to which a few others might be added, of contributions to medical and other scientific journals by members of the profession of this District who died prior to 1866, which, he adds, "make a very creditable exhibit of their intelligence, high culture, industry, skill, and powers of observation." Those ninety-four essays were the contributions of thirty men; fifty-seven were by seven authors, and thirty-two were the contributions of four Army and two Navy surgeons. The lack of ambition, at least so far as it might relate to the acquisition of a national reputation, seems to have been a characteristic of the earlier members of this society, among whom were some very learned men. It does not appear that any one of them took advantage of the unusual opportunities for the attainment of a national reputation offered by a residence in a city to which came annually the most distinguished statesmen, jurists, and politicians from every part of the country, and in which resided the men holding high positions in the National Government, and the foreign embassies. It cannot be asserted that the reputation of any one of those learned and accomplished physicians extended beyond the limits of the "Ten Miles Square." Many circumstances may have induced such modesty and reticence,—such as the

laborious life of medical men during that period ; the competitive struggle in a new and cosmopolitan city, with limited mail and transportation facilities ; their interest and activity in local enterprises ; the want of a leader with courage and ambition to set the example, and with capacity to take the lead in scientific medical literature ; the limited opportunities in the country for such publication, and none in this city ;-- but the most rational explanation lies in the fact that prior to 1866 this society only met occasionally, at very remote intervals, for the discussion of medical and scientific subjects. The last clause in the preceding sentence sounds the key-note of progress and eminent success in every medical community. A practical and active working medical society is the final extension of the collegiate and hospital education. The later history of the profession in this District establishes the fact that, with but few exceptions, those who have attained the greatest success have been active and intelligent workers in this society.

Since the date (1866) at which the scientific department was reorganized, the number and value of such contributions have increased beyond the possibility of any statement, sufficiently condensed for this address, that would intelligently and adequately set forth their actual and relative scientific value. Suffice it to say that many, both in the line of exhaustive discussion and original research, have been of the highest merit and given to their authors world-wide reputations. Much, however, remains to be accomplished. The transactions of the current year give promise of a progressive future and the speedy attainment of that success in medical science which its location at the National Capital demands.

Time does not permit me to note all the papers (twenty-eight) and discussions worthy of honorable mention, but

to omit reference to some of more than ordinary interest would be inexcusable neglect of an imperative duty. In this class I include the paper, with discussion, on Diphtheria; the paper, with the discussion, on Typhoid Fever; and the paper and discussion on Appendicitis; as also the report of the special committee, with the discussion, on Tuberculosis, and the report on the water-supply and methods of filtration of some of the continental cities. This special notation gives expression with marked significance to the ability, industry, and patient research of those to whom credit is due, and to the value of the information added to the common store of medical knowledge. The recent papers and discussion on Ear disease are worthy of the highest commendation. I regret that the report of the special committee charged with the investigation of the recent introduction of Small-pox in this city could not be submitted during the present session. The symposium on Tuberculosis was the most complete presentation of recent knowledge of the subject that has been made. But the subject which has attracted the most wide-spread interest and attention is the report of the special committee on the causes and prevalence of Typhoid Fever in the District of Columbia. It has disseminated more generally the reputation of this society than any paper or report ever read before it, though in scientific value it could not exceed the elaborate discussions on Diphtheria and Tuberculosis.

For the first time in the history of this great Government, the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States has, through one of its standing committees, invited a medical society to appear, through a committee of its own members, before it to present and explain the report of its investigations into the causes and prevalence of Typhoid Fever in this District, and the importance and

necessity for an increased and improved water-supply, and sewerage extension; and, after having heard that committee, ordered, by joint resolution of both houses of Congress, four thousand copies of the report to be printed, and illuminated with the graphic illustrations which your committee had prepared to exhibit and demonstrate the completeness of its investigations. Never before in the history of this society has the municipal government sought its advice and counsel in matters of grave importance pertaining to sanitary science, and given promise of cordial co-operation in efforts to secure the enactment of laws to regulate the practice of medicine in the District of Columbia, to secure a supply of pure milk, and to prevent the desecration of graves. And not until recently has any body of its citizens requested a conference with a committee of this society in the interest of the reforms referred to, in which the Board of Trade is equally concerned and has declared its purpose to promote. What is the significance of such facts as I have thus collated? Do they not emphasize the power and influence of this society in this community, with men and bodies of men, and with the local and national governments; and invite it to expand its usefulness in a more aggressive policy, in the line of additional and reformatory legislation promotive of sanitation and preventive medicine? I appeal to you to accept the exhortation I have so often delivered to you—assert yourself, that you may widen the sphere of your usefulness and influence. To this end I offered, at the semi-annual meeting in July last, the following amendments to the constitution, which I commend to your favorable consideration.

1st. On or about the first Monday of January, annually, there shall be appointed by the President a Committee on Public Health, to consist of seven active members.

It shall be the duty of said Committee on Public Health to report annually, in January, the condition of the public health for the preceding year.

2d. On or about the first Monday of January, annually, there shall be appointed by the President a Committee on Legislation, to be composed of seven active members. Said Committee on Legislation shall discharge such duties pertaining to legislation as the society may direct.

These two propositions are of sufficient importance to command your attention. The third introduces a debatable issue, and is as follows:

3d. On or about the first Monday of January, annually, there shall be appointed by the President a Committee on the Relation of the Medical Society of the District of Columbia to the Public Welfare, to consist of five active members.

It shall be the duty of this committee to consider the propriety and expediency of communications to the public either by the publication of reports or abstracts of the proceedings of the society, and of the admission of reporters or other persons to the meetings on special occasions.

When said committee, with the consent of the society, shall determine to make any communication to the public, it shall prepare and supervise the printing and publication of such communication.

The purpose of this third proposition is to prescribe some definite method of communicating with the public at large, when, as occasion may occur, it is important or necessary that the general public should be advised of the consideration of matters that refer to the well-being and healthfulness of the community, and in which there is such general interest as make it expedient and proper to present the consensus of medical opinion to the consideration

of the community at large. Some such regulation or reform is a very desirable advance in the method of this society. It will bring it in closer touch with public sentiment and place its membership upon the highest plane of good citizenship. The meetings of the American Medical Association and of its sections; of the State Medical Societies, of the Congress of American Physicians and Surgeons, and of the various special societies are open to the public without the semblance of restraint upon the admission of the general public. Why should this society deny admission to laymen to a discussion on the differential diagnosis of Chicken-pox and Small-pox, or on the prevention and management of Tuberculosis, such as took place during the present year, or on the report of the committee on the causes and prevalence of Typhoid Fever in the District of Columbia? We cannot fill the measure of our responsibility, and acquire the power and influence in this community that belong to us, if this society continues to withhold from the general public the information to which every good citizen is entitled. The Sanitary League and the Board of Trade have already grasped the opportunities in which this society should have, long ago, assumed the leadership.

When I came here (1848), and for many years previous, there was a coterie of medical men distinguished for their professional attainments and honored for their public spirit. They came to the front in every enterprise to promote the well-being of society, the comforts of life and the happiness of the people at large. Their habits of life, general information and high sense of public duty not only fitted them for the common duties of good citizenship, but impelled them to share the responsibilities and obligations in all measures pertaining to the commonweal. That such men should command a dominant influence in

any community goes without saying. But it is not so much the fact that such was the case as it is the example that should be of most value to their successors and survivors. The medical profession does not entail compulsory exemption from the ordinary public duties of good citizenship, and the time has come when this society should assert itself with all the vigor, force, and power which such a body of men united in a common cause could develop and exercise.

During the present year the class of "membership by invitation" has been increased by the election of thirty-five men, coming from the medical corps of the Army, Navy, and Marine Hospital Service, the three chief officers of these corps being included in the number. This is a full and complete restoration of the *esprit de corps* and comradeship which subsisted in the earlier period of the history of this society, but had practically lapsed for many years past, due, perhaps, more to inadvertence than to intention. That you may the more fully realize the importance and significance of this restoration, let me recall your attention to the active and direct participation of surgeons in the Army and Navy in the foundation and organization of this society and of the Medical Association. Thomas Henderson and Richard Weightman of the Army and Samuel Horsley of the Navy were founders. Henderson and Horsley were present at the meeting of the physicians of Washington and Georgetown, September 26, 1817, called to consider the expediency of the "organization of a medical society." The former was one of seven appointed, at that meeting, to "draft a constitution and by-laws," and at the first meeting, held after the adoption of the report, Weightman was elected Librarian, and Henderson Recording Secretary, to which office the latter was re-elected at the first meeting (March 8, 1819).

held after its incorporation. These incidents in the early history of this society affirm the close relation and active co-operation of the two military corps, through their distinguished representatives, in the preliminary organization and the foundation of a medical society which has continuously maintained an active existence in commemoration of the wisdom of its founders. In 1820 Edmund Cutbush of the Navy, and in 1822 Joseph Lovell, the first Surgeon-General of the Army, were admitted to membership; and throughout the entire period of seventy-five years there has been a continuous succession of membership of Army and Navy surgeons.

Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true that Surgeon-General Lovell was the founder of the Medical Association of the District of Columbia. Thomas Miller, in his inaugural address, delivered upon his accession to the presidency, states distinctly that the preliminary movements to effect the organization were suggested by General Lovell, and that he furnished a transcript of the rules and regulations of a similar society in Boston for the instruction and guidance of those associated in its establishment. Lovell and Henderson were members of the committee to draft "a system of ethics and fee bill." Lovell was elected one of the counsellors at the first meeting, and Henderson was the author of the address to the public to explain the objects and purpose of the organization, and quiet the discontent and animosities which had incited the community to threaten acts of violence.

The active influence of Lovell and Henderson in the organization and permanent establishment of the Medical Association of the District of Columbia seems to have been entirely forgotten. It was formed to unite the profession into one concrete body, upon the basis of high professional character and decorum, and to establish and

maintain uniformity of professional relation and intercourse between its members, thereby segregating the pretenders, charlatans, and men of low and doubtful repute, and, at the same time, present the profession to the community as a body of gentlemen animated by the highest impulses of honor, dignity, and the obligations of christian physicians. The wisdom of its organization has been attested by its history.

The interesting and pertinent facts are that Army and Navy surgeons were actively instrumental in the organization of the two medical societies in the District, one of which has completed its seventy-fifth and the other its sixty-first year of continuous existence, and that the profession of this District owes to two Army surgeons the inception, organization, and successful defence of a society, established in 1833, to define and prescribe the rules and regulations of ethical intercourse and relations of medical gentlemen, and of the profession with the public. Such historical events ought to guarantee permanency of good feeling and harmonious co-operation in all the relations of professional life and association between the members of these military corps on duty in this District and the profession, with so many of whom they may be brought into the closest professional intercourse.

And, now, gentlemen of the Government services, in view of the foregoing citations of the early and recent incidents of our history, I offer you the greetings of a cordial and fraternal friendship, and bid you welcome to the home of your sires.

And I offer you the congratulation of a record without one negative vote on the admissions of thirty-five men.

The attempted but unsuccessful revolt of the community against the Medical Association of the District of Columbia was a most remarkable occurrence. It was a strange

freak of public opinion that assembled citizens in mass-meetings to organize concerted action to frustrate the united effort of physicians to enforce such rules of conduct as would secure to the community the full fruition of the highest qualifications of the medical fraternity, and harmonious co-operation among themselves in a common pursuit. And it was even more strange that the same citizens should in mass-meeting, in angry misapprehension, have resolved to sever the close relation of the family physician, and, to accomplish this purpose, have invited from a distance an influx of strangers to supply the places and accept the confidences of the evicted family physicians. It was not less remarkable that men so lacking in *esprit de corps* should have been so easily found to respond to such momentary outbursts of bad temper and bad manners. The sturdy independence and courage of such men as Lovell, Henderson, Thomas Miller, and their associates was in marked contrast with the conduct of those who took fright and withdrew from the Association, and of those who refused to join it until peace had been restored. Fortunately for the reputation of the profession, there is no record of the names of such recusants, beyond the statement of Miller to the effect that "those who had withdrawn returned, and those who settled here under the call of the citizens petitioned for admission."

The Health Department of this District should command your immediate and active attention. With the present management, and your earnest and effective co-operation with the Board of Commissioners, and that body of intelligent and practical business men known as the Board of Trade, it may be speedily advanced to that standard of proficiency in sanitary science and practical work that will make it—what it ought to have been long ago—the most progressive and complete department of the kind, and an example to all others in this country.

There should be established, under the immediate and direct supervision of this department, a biological laboratory, equipped with a skilled bacteriologist, a competent assistant, and janitor, and supplied with all the appurtenances necessary for bacteriological examination of water, soil, dusts, milk, and food, and also to determine the presence and nature of specific pathogenic germs in cases of suspected contagious and infectious disease.

Just now, when the medical world is enthused with the experimental success of Antitoxine in the prevention and treatment of diphtheria, this capital of a great, rich, and powerful nation is without the means and appliances necessary for even an experimental observation. The good or bad effects cannot even be seen, much less tested and verified. This city should be the center from which should emanate the information relating to such a discovery, and from which should be distributed to the millions throughout the land a remedy which gives promise of such untold beneficence to mankind, in that it may rob that most dreadful and fatal disease of its virulence and mortality.

The phenomenal progress and discoveries in the past ten years give assuring promise of the coming triumph of medical science, when, with the consent and intelligent co-operation of the people, it will establish its ability to eradicate all preventable diseases, and then, and then only, will it have accomplished the highest aims of maximum beneficence.

Now, permit me to call your attention to some of the absurdities of the laws, regulations, and practices relating to the health and Health Department of this District.

The chief clerk of the department is the deputy Health Officer—a combination of two systems in one occupation. If a Health Officer can only be qualified by a medical

education, why is not such a qualification equally necessary for his deputy?

The inspection of plumbing is under the Engineer Department. Permits to do the work should remain as at present. It is not necessary that the inspector should be a physician, but he should be a thoroughly qualified officer and under the immediate direction and supervision of the Health Department.

The supervision of foods and drugs and prosecutions for adulterations is in charge of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, a bureau of the U. S. Treasury Department—a glaring absurdity, fringed with red tape.

The Health Department is charged with the work of kidnapping unlicensed dogs and impounding other roving beasts.

The disinfection of private dwellings in which contagious diseases have occurred is entrusted to dog-catchers and cattle-drivers because of inadequate force and no money, with seven hundred thousand dollars surplus revenue in the vaults of the Treasury Department. The Pound Service “may be more honored in the breach than the observance,” and the master and his whips may “be gashed with honorable scars,” but the service lies too low in the lap of glory to command that class of intelligent employees required for the disinfection of private dwellings. The department should, without regard to cost, be supplied with the necessary apparatus, appliances, vans, and employees for prompt and efficient disinfection of dwelling, furniture, and clothing.

The medical relief of the poor, supervision of admission of the poor to hospitals, location and direction of free dispensaries, and control of physicians to the poor are distributed around and about to a variety of supervisions. They should be under one director, preferably the Health Department.

Deaths without medical attendance, suspicious and criminal deaths may or may not, according to circumstances, be referred for investigation to either the Health Officer or Coroner, or both. Uniformity of procedure and certainty of result require that one of these officers should have the exclusive supervision of all such classes of deaths.

The jurisdiction of the Health Officer over the management of the public schools is limited to the abatement of nuisances in or about the buildings, vaccination of the scholars and disinfection of buildings during prevalence of contagious diseases. Is it not as much the duty of the commonwealth or municipality to make vigorous and healthy mothers and fathers as it is to make scholars?

The power, prosperity, wealth, and progress of a nation consists, for the most part, in the number, health, vigor, and intelligence of its population. Should not then the Health Officer, or some other equally competent officer, be charged with some definite supervision of the plans and construction of the school buildings, and of the curriculum, that the physical being may not be sacrificed and dwarfed, either by the absence of, or improper, physical culture, or too much and too high mental development?

As an additional illustration of the unwise and phenomenal legislation of Congress I will cite the following:

The joint resolution legalizing the health ordinances and regulations enacted by the Board of Health, before its abolition, excepts, by special designation, from such legalization sections 7, 9, and 14 of the ordinance "to declare what shall be deemed nuisances injurious to health, and to provide for the removal thereof;" consequently those sections are inoperative and void.

Section 7 refers to the abatement of nuisances arising from stagnant water and marshy lands made "by defective drainage or otherwise."

Section 9 refers to the abatement of nuisances of "filthy and offensive" dwelling-houses or buildings "wherein people live, congregate, or assemble."

Section 14 limits the duties of scavengers to the officers appointed for that purpose.

The repeal of these provisions of the ordinance not only strips the Health Department of all powers to abate the nuisances referred to in sections 7 and 9, which are so common and detrimental to health, but, by the repeal of section 14, seeks the promotion and continuous increase of defective, leaking, and unclean privies, by inviting every householder to be his own scavenger.

With nine thousand privies in the city of Washington, there may be, by authority of Congress, an equal number of night-soil scavengers, with as many volunteer assistants, not one of whom would be amenable to any legal or sanitary regulation. Such are examples of the intelligent legislation for this District by the Congress of the United States.

And now, coming nearer to our fiduciary policies, look at the discrimination between the two professions. The attorney and his two assistants receive, respectively, four, two, and one thousand six hundred dollars per annum. The Health Officer, medical sanitary inspector, and chemist inspector of dairy products receive, respectively, three thousand, fifteen hundred, and twelve hundred dollars per annum. But this is not all. The asphalt and cement Chemist, street and sewer material, receives two thousand and four hundred dollars per annum, while the chemist of dairy products, the food of babies, children, and to a greater or less extent of the entire population, gets but twelve hundred dollars per annum—not much more than enough to supply a baker's family with abundance of pure fresh milk.

All these and many more of such incongruities of law, regulations, and practices are in vogue in this capital city of this great nation.

The study of the morbid specimens exhibited at the weekly meetings, an average of 2½ each week, many of which were of great interest, has been too superficial for such a society as this. As a rule, the members are content with an objective inspection and a description in outline of the case by the members in charge. I have attempted to elicit discussion, and occasionally indicated the points of special interest, hoping thereby to suggest a line of profitable debate, but without success. Such specimens offer the opportunity for the practical study of the nature and diagnosis of disease, and constitute the basis and groundwork of clinical medicine. Without such knowledge the practice of medicine must be experimental and empirical.

The exhibition of living illustrations of rare and special cases of disease should be encouraged. It will add greatly to the interest and instruction of our deliberations.

There is a prevalent misapprehension among the younger members in respect to their reluctance to engage in the discussions of scientific subjects because of the fear of criticism. There is no period of probation or parliamentary custom in this society that imposes any restraint upon intellectual capacity and scientific attainment. He who knows what he has to say can and ought to say it. The youngest member owes that much to himself and to his seniors. May I, in this connection, tell you that the first paper I read before a medical society, now forty-two years ago, was criticised with unflinching severity by the late Dr. Wotherspoon of the Army. I was like the poor boy at a country frolic, but I did not hide behind the barn door and peep through the cracks to see who was

in pursuit, but stormed the battery, coming out of it badly damaged, but alive, and have been myself ever since. May one who was a doctor before the parents of many of you were married, and who has passed through the crucible of criticism, invite and lead you to the front rank of active and aggressive membership, for which so many of you are so well fitted.

Some method should be devised to economize the time of the weekly meetings. The elaborate reports prepared by the very efficient Recording Secretary consume a period of time varying from twenty to forty minutes, which should be devoted to the scientific transactions. I have given this matter much consideration and recommend to you the creation of the office of Assistant Recording Secretary, with a moderate salary, the incumbent of which office shall be charged with the duty of making, after consultation with the members concerned, the necessary corrections in the reports, which shall be verified by a committee consisting of the President, Recording and Assistant Secretaries, and when any alteration is made, not accepted by said committee, such fact shall be reported to the society at the meeting succeeding that at which the discussion took place.

The policy and propriety of inviting, during each year, one or more men from other cities, of eminent distinction in special branches of medical science, to deliver addresses before you, is worthy of your consideration. Care should be taken to avoid the rôle of the advertising medium, and restrict such invitations only to physicians whose eminent success and high character preclude even the suspicion of motives of doubtful repute. If in your judgment such a departure from the ordinary routine of society proceedings should be established, put it upon the highest plane of intellectual capacity, eminent success,

and highest personal integrity, and then, and then only, will the distinguished honor find its compensation in the recompense of a duty well done.

I, in common with many members, regret—in fact, I hope the regret is shared by every member—that the recommendations of my immediate predecessor, in regard to the acquisition of a permanent home, could not be realized, because of the legal disability of the society to borrow or raise by assessment the necessary amount of money, but it can receive money by gift, donation, and bequest to any amount that will yield an annual income not exceeding six thousand dollars. Then why not proceed as best we can to commemorate the concluding session of the 76th year by liberal donations to a Home Fund? Let us make one “more pull, a long pull and a pull altogether,” and to this end I offer you the opportunity, by distributing a circular subscription, to which you may affix your signatures, with the amount you may be willing to donate annually to that fund.

The Directory for Nurses for the most part, if not wholly, owes its organization and permanent establishment in this city to this society. It has now become self-supporting, and is provided with ample accommodations for the complete fulfilment of all the requirements of such an institution, but it lacks that general support of the profession of the District to which it is entitled, and to which it must appeal for that continued success and usefulness which has contributed so much to the improved management and treatment of disease. It has become a common practice for competent and popular nurses, after having qualified by registry and endorsement, and acquired special popularity with members of the profession, to withdraw from the Directory, and organize into separate directories of limited members, with definite headquarters at selected

localities, and then, by special and personal solicitations, obtain preference in selection over those to whom employment should be given. The members of this society owe it to themselves to foster this institution to the exclusion of all private directories or association of nurses. I know this recommendation will invoke the criticism of some of the best and most popular nurses in this city, but my duty to the sick in this community is far above my interest in the success of any nurse or coterie of nurses.

With the induction of my successor into office I will have performed my last official act, and completed the final duty of this last and most distinguished honor of my professional life. In the coming years of retirement from the places of honor and trust in this society, I solicit the consideration of one who will not be in the way of preferment and success of any member, and will value the regard of his associates and peers as the measure of his usefulness and success. In view of these considerations, I venture to incur the risk of unfavorable criticism by making the following recommendation. Experience and observation have convinced me that annual rotation in the office of President retards the progress of scientific societies, more especially so of those that meet at short intervals during the greater part of each year.

Charles Worthington, the first President, was re-elected for twelve successive years; Thomas Sims died during his third term; Frederick May occupied the office during fifteen successive years; James C. Hall declined a re-election at the expiration of his second term; Alexander McWilliams died before the expiration of his first year; William Jones was honored by seven re-elections; Joseph Borrows by six; Charles H. Leiberman by three terms; and Thomas Miller by two, and then, 1870, began the routine of annual rotation. During fifty-three years but nine

members held the office of President, three of whom died in office.

I do not advise a return to the early practice of re-election during life, but I do advise abandonment of the annual rotation, and the adoption of some rule of action that will more clearly set forth the importance and dignity of the office of President.

Not one in five of the members can, to-day, name in rotation the ex-Presidents now living, and it is even doubtful if each one of them can name the year of his service. Such are the inevitable results of the lamentable fact that no one, during the past twenty-four years, has remained in office long enough to impress either you or himself with the dignity and honor of an office that rotates the incumbent into private life annually on the first Monday of January. Among my predecessors there have been many who honored themselves by prompt and faithful discharge of the duties, but, like others, they stepped down and out at the expiration of one year of service. The record honors the man who could not find time to come once a week to these weekly meetings, as it does the man who came promptly and sat here throughout the hours, giving his undivided attention to the duties imposed upon him. Does not justice and science demand discrimination between the unremitting discharge of honorable duties and loose and slipshod neglect and evasion? My suggestion, then, is, when your President honors himself by faithful, efficient, and satisfactory services, honor yourself by a re-election; and then mark the continuous progress of this society.

But one death has occurred in the membership during the year. Dr. Charles J. Osmun died of diphtheria, contracted in the line of duty, thus adding another to the numerous instances of personal sacrifice and death in-

curred by dangerous exposure in the faithful and conscientious discharge of the obligations of our profession. The death of Osmun, and of John W. Dunn of the same disease, contracted in like manner, should admonish us of the necessity of rigid and thorough personal hygiene during attendance upon such cases, and teach the community the malignancy of a disease from which we, with all possible care, cannot acquire exemption.

And now, disclaiming any invidiousness, I must commend to your consideration the distinguished services of your chairman of the Committee on Essays, Dr. Thomas C. Smith, to whose judicious and indefatigable labors I owe the debt of profound gratitude, in that he has crowned my administration of the duties of presiding officer with such success.

The Treasurer is always in his seat guarding the treasury with the fidelity of one who insists upon holding a surplus and adding to the accumulations of the society.

And, finally, I beg you will accept my thanks for the honor conferred by election to a second term to this high office, and for the uniform courtesy and deference shown to me in the discharge of its duties.

